

PRIME NEWS

Special Tactical Intelligence Narcotics Group (Sting) members at a press conference in Bukit Aman last year. Pic by Abdullah Yusof



Sting-ing success in war against drugs



2 ST
91/1/16
MS 4



MENACE: Statistics show elite police unit ramping up the pressure on drug lords, kingpins

HANI SHAMIRA SHAHRUDIN
KUALA LUMPUR
shamira@nst.com.my

TWO years ago, when federal police launched its Special Tactical Intelligence Narcotics Group (Sting), the upper echelons of the police force knew just what they were doing.

The elite unit, under the Narcotics Department, would give the force the edge in its war against drug lords and kingpins, it was believed. The department's capabilities would be enhanced, there would be more operations and syndicates could be targeted more efficiently,

top cops argued.

They were right, and the statistics have proven it.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar said Sting enabled the Narcotics Department to move further in the war against drugs and drug abuse.

"(It's) not only that we have increased enforcement, but our intelligence network is more efficient and collaboration with our foreign counterparts is better," he told the *New Straits Times* recently.

An elite unit within the Narcotics Department also allowed for greater focus on syndicates which process drugs, going to the source of the drug problem in the country.

Khalid said this was Sting's primary focus — drug-processing syndicates and kingpins. In fact, he said, it was the Narcotics Department's target as a whole.

Almost immediately after Sting was launched on Jan 30, 2014, there were a number of successes, and this carried on throughout the year. Last year proved even better.

Federal Narcotics Department director Datuk Seri Mokhtar Shariff said statistics showed that the amount of drugs seized in 2015 nearly doubled the amount seized in the previous year.

These statistics, made available to the NST, did not reveal the street value of the drugs seized, which is believed to be in the hundreds of millions of ringgit.

As for organic drugs, the department and Sting recorded an 86 per cent increase in seizures of ketum leaves from 15,541.40kg in 2014 to 28,933.44kg last year. Narcotics officers also seized 69,675 litres of ketum juice last year, compared with 45,429 litres in 2014.

A total of 1,744.10kg of cannabis was confiscated in 2015, compared with 578.19kg the year before. Fifty-two cannabis plants were seized last year, though this was a 28 per cent drop from the previous year.

One organic drug not normally seen here but discovered in rather large quantities last year was khat, a flowering plant native to the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Last year, Sting seized 92.11kg of khat leaves.

As for synthetic drugs, 972.31kg of syabu were seized, an increase of 28 per cent compared with 761.71kg seized in 2014.












Police also seized 742.54kg of heroin, an increase of 64 per cent, and almost two million Eramin-5 pills were confiscated, nearly triple the number of the pills in 2014.

Also seeing a threefold increase in seizures were Ecstasy pills, from 117,702 in 2014 to 407,475 last year.

The increased operations against drug syndicates had also caught the attention of National Anti-Drug Agency director-general Datuk Suhaimi Abdullah.

"Among the reasons for the increasing number of drug abusers is that drugs are easily accessible in the country. (That is why) my agen-

Drugs seized in 2014 and 2015

Type of drugs			2014	2015
	Ketum leaves	Kg	15,541.40	28,933.44
	Cannabis	Kg	578.19	1,744.10
	Syabu	Kg	761.71	972.31
	Heroin	Kg	453.78	742.54
	Khat leaves	Kg	0	92.11
	Ketamine	Kg	216.61	48.43
	Eramin-5	Pills	467,133	1,986,786
	Yaba	Pills	557,335	538,176
	Ecstasy	Pills	117,702	407,475
	Ketum juice	Litre	45,429.91	69,675.78
	Cannabis	Plants	72	52

cy, along with other enforcement agencies, are working closely to combat the menace."

Suhaimi said what drew people to the drug trade was the fact that it was a lucrative business.

"Either the perpetrators get rich or get caught."

If the numbers are anything to go by, this year could see even more drugs seized. In the first two weeks

of the year alone, drugs worth RM10.4 million were seized, along with RM4.5 million in assets believed to have been purchased using drug money.

Khalid reminded the people that the fight against drugs and abuse nationwide was "very real".

"That is why efforts against drugs and drug abuse need to be enhanced from time to time."



PRAYER TIMES

Sejahtera bersama perlindungan IKHLAS

Website: www.takaful-ikhlas.com.my

Tel no.: 03-2723 9999 Call centre: 03 2723 9696

Faks no.: 03-2723 9998

TAKAFUL IKHLAS BERHAD (593075 U)

(Wholly owned by MNRB Holdings Berhad)

ENJOY PERATE UP TO 25% ON THIS FESTIVE SEASON WITH IKHLAS KEMBARA TAKAFUL VIA @-IKHLAS OR SALAM IKHLAS

	SUBUH (am)	SYURUK	ZUHUR	ASAR (pm)	MAGHRIB	ISYAK
Malacca	6:03	7:23	1:26	4:48	7:25	8:38
Penang	6:15	7:33	1:33	4:55	7:28	8:41
K. Lumpur	6:08	7:26	1:28	4:50	7:25	8:38
Johor Baru	5:56	7:16	1:20	4:42	7:20	8:32
Kuantan	6:01	7:21	1:23	4:45	7:21	8:33
Ipoh	6:12	7:29	1:31	4:53	7:27	8:40